

Dec. 8, 1787.

DEAR SIR,

—— “ It was entirely through the recommendation of the quarter-sessions, held at Louth, that the poor were set to spinning through this part of the county of Lincoln; and by the great assiduity, &c. of our worthy magistrate, Mr. Bowyer, the plan has been carried so very far into execution. The materials were at first procured by the overseers of the poor of each parish, and the wheels and reels, &c. bought by them, at the parish's expense; and, as soon as the children can spin tolerably well, the wool-comber delivers out the wool to the spinners, and pays them for the spinning per pound, and overhanks; and the children earn soon from 18*d.* to 3*s.* per week, from seven years old.

“ The children in schools were and are taught by a woman procured for that purpose, at the ^{own}expense of the parish at first, but are afterwards paid out of the earnings of the children so taught, in proportion to their earnings; and deductions are also made for fire and candle.

“ Before any school-rooms were built, the children were taught in some convenient room in each parish, or in some old uninhabited house, as best suited. The school-hours are generally from six in the morning, in summer, until six or seven in the evening; and, in winter, from seven in the morning till seven or eight at night.

“ No school-rooms have been built so large as to contain a hundred children; nor do we think it would be eligible to have them so large as to contain so many; but, on the contrary, we think the best size are those which will *properly* hold about twenty wheels, or fewer, according to the children in each parish; and, where there is a great number of children, *I think* different schools should be erected in such parts of the parish as may best suit the convenience of the children coming to and going from school; which schools may be built of slight and cheap materials; but *that* ~~as~~ ^{parishes} choose;

choose; for some have been made for the purpose *also* of the teacher's residing in. A school for twenty should be 36 feet long by 15 or 16 feet wide, with windows on *both* sides, as may be best for light; and, for warmth, we use stoves generally, which are not expensive at *the first*, and save a great deal in coals, &c.

“ The teachers are *always* such as can teach the children to read, one hour *at the least* each day, and take good care of their morals; and also instruct them how to behave themselves to *all sorts* of people, as far as in their power.

“ Where Sunday-schools are already established, the children are attended *generally* by the teacher, and others appointed.”

Such an institution would, wherever it is carried into effect, tend to every desirable consequence, as well with respect to the pecuniary interests of the occupiers in the place; by diminishing the poor's rates, as to the comfort of the poor themselves, by introducing among their children regular habits of industry and orderly behaviour, and would, consequently, tend to the happiness of those also, who, although elevated above the apprehension of poverty, are not above the feelings of humanity, and therefore must lament those distresses of their neighbours, which they cannot help seeing, and are not able to remove. Next to the desire of possessing a competency ourselves, it is a natural wish, that all those with whom we are connected, by any intercourse of vicinity or employment, should also betray no signs of misery or distress, arising from poverty. The visions of the philosopher or poet, who fancies happiness lies in rural independence, can never be realized in situations where much is seen, heard, or felt, of his neighbour's misery; nor can a well-disposed mind taste *the sweet oblivion of the cares of life*, while in the midst of scenes of distress.

Some men of taste have supposed, that, in a landscape, the pleasing effect upon the mind, of smoke arising from the chimney of a neat cottage, flows from a selfish comparison of one's own situation with that of the cottager: — it is pleasant *procul alterius*

spectare.

speſtare laborem : — but they muſt excuſe me if I differ with them in opinion ; it is a matter of feeling only, the cottage ſmoke awakens an idea of comfort ; the imagination ruſhes to the chimney-corner, and ſees honeſt labour recompended by its proper rewards ; and the pleaſure which is then taſted is of a purer nature ; it is pleaſant *propè alterius ſpeſtare ſolamen* : — but if the hideous appearance of miſery and diſtreſs, ariſing from chilling poverty, mixes with the idea, every pleaſing effect is inſtantly changed to its oppoſite ; and we turn with anguiſh from thoſe objects which recal to the mind ſcenes of miſery we are not able to relieve.

Thoſe, who are advocates for, or patrons of, Sunday ſchools, would be more certain of their good effect, and the cauſe of religion and morality would receive a greater advantage from their very laudable endeavours, were the foundation of thoſe ſchools to be laid in ſchools of induſtry : a ſuperſtructure of religious ſentiment would be ſubſtantially built on the ſolid foundation of habitual induſtry. A poor man *cannot be religious who is not induſtrious* ; becauſe, having no property himſelf, he cannot honeſtly command the comforts, or even the neceſſaries, of life, but by induſtry : every church-going habit in that claſs of ſociety, not accompanied by habitual induſtry, is hypocritical ; becauſe honeſty cannot be the moral ſentiment which influences the habit.

That the poor ſhould be inſtructed in their duties of religion is certainly neceſſary ; but we ſhould remember that thoſe are divided into two heads, our duty towards God and towards our neighbour ; the one cannot be diſcharged without the other ; that induſtry, which is a neceſſary duty towards your neighbour, is equally neceſſary to render your religious duties towards God acceptable.

But the art of writing is not neceſſary to a performance of the duties of the poor, either towards God or towards their neighbour, and it may lead towards a breach of their duty towards *both* : there muſt be in ſociety hewers of wood and drawers of water ; if all are good penmen, where are thoſe to be found who will contentedly perform

perform the laborious offices of society, and live through a life of toil ? If honesty be not a fixed principle of the mind, the acquisition of writing may offer a temptation that will lead to ruin.

Reading may be considered nearly in the same point of light. If we could confine the poor boy to reading his Prayer-book and his Testament only, nothing but good would arise from teaching poor children to read ; but, the art being acquired, can we be sure whether the use of it may lead ? To prognosticate ; let us only recollect what books ourselves, when boys, would read with the greatest avidity ; and, before we have reason to deplore the consequence of bringing the poor up, in such a manner, as may make them less satisfied with their humble and laborious station in life, let us, in idea, anticipate the probable misuse of these qualifications, and, by a kind of prophetic foresight, be certain of the effect, before we, by encouragement, foster the cause.

While these doubts are thrown out, with respect to the expediency of so much of the institution of Sunday-schools, as respects the teaching *all* the children of the poor to read and write ; an implicit confidence in the good intention of the patrons of them should be explicitly declared, coupled with this suggestion ; that, probably, the only proper foundation of a Sunday-school is upon a school of daily industry.

So thought the patrons of the schools in Lincolnshire, and such has been their practice ; the respectable magistrate, to whom that county has been, and it is hoped all England will be, obliged, for his excellent exemplification of the experiment, as well as for his perspicuous and well-written recommendation of the institution, and the detail of its success in that county, has finished the plan in a most complete manner, by a Sunday-school ; and, in so doing, has set us a noble example of training youth in the habit of industry *the six days*, and in the duties of religion *the seventh*.

L E T T E R XXXVII.

I HAVE, in pursuance of my plan, now sent you a few pages on ale-houses and their customers; tracing the rise and progress of the baneful and seducing habit of drinking strong liquors, from the earliest days, in this island, to the present æra; when the revenue receives above five millions annually from the inhabitants of the southern part of Great Britain, by their indulging themselves in this practice.

Julius Cæsar, in describing the manners and customs of the inhabitants of England, at the time of his invasion, about 77 years before the Christian epoch, says, that those were the most civilized who inhabited Kent, and that they differed but little from the Gauls; that those, who lived in the interior parts, sowed but little corn, and lived on milk and flesh.

In describing the inhabitants of Gaul, he says nearly the same of them, "*Agriculturæ non student; majorque pars victus eorum in lacte et caseo et carne consistit.*"

Solinus, who wrote about eighty years after the birth of Christ, says, that the Britons drank a fermented liquor, made of barley, unknown in former ages, or in any other country in Europe.

Tacitus, who wrote about thirty years afterwards, speaks strongly of the drunken habits of the Germans, near neighbours to the Gauls; "*Diem noctemque continuare potando, nulli probrum;*" he also says, that they made use of a liquor from barley, or wheat, fermented.

We must conceive, that Cæsar was either a very superficial observer of the habits of those people, into whose country he carried fire and sword; or that, in a few years, habits, destructive of their health and morals, were introduced among them by their conquerors,

querors, and had struck such a root, as to have very soon become a national vice.

The attachment of savages to strong liquors is a well-known fact; the excess in which they indulge themselves with ardent spirits, whenever they can get at them, and the inveteracy of the habit, when once indulged in, almost tend to prove, analogically, that fermented liquors were not known, in Gaul and Britain, in the days of Cæsar, although, about a hundred years afterwards, the drinking them to excess was become a confirmed habit to the Germans, when Tacitus wrote his terse and elegant dissertation on their manners.

In the first century of the Christian æra, the Britons used a fermented liquor from barley: in the latter end of the 18th century, the public revenue arising from the duties on liquors, principally made from barley, and most in use with the common people, exceeded five millions sterling a year.

The habit is become of too strong a growth, is too general, and too inveterate, to be eradicated; and, were it not, the financier of the day would discourage the attempt; he would tell us, we should act as unskilful gardeners, plucking up valuable plants with the weeds; if drunkenness disappeared from the land, a considerable part of five millions sterling would disappear from the coffers of the Exchequer; and, in proportion as we restrain the habit, we diminish the revenue arising from it.

But, however impolitic the eradication of drunkenness may be, when seen in the light of revenue, were it possible to effect it, there can no harm arise, either to our finances or our morals, in tracing as well as the very few lights, which can be found on this subject, will permit us, the habit of English drunkenness, from its infancy to its maturity: it will be the history of ale-houses; will be found to grow with their growth, and to increase with their number; and it is possible that, in the progress of the investigation, one great and operative cause of the expense in maintaining our poor, and

the miserable poverty they sustain, may appear too plainly to be mistaken ; and, having found out the cause of a disease, he is a timid physician who does not prescribe the remedy.

A fermented liquor from barley was the first intoxicating drink we read of in use among the Britons ; but probably hydromel, or honey mixed with water and fermented, was nearly a cotemporary indulgence ; when the aborigines of the island, to avoid the tyranny of the Romans, withdrew to their mountains and *morasses*, we find that they carried with them the knowledge and use of the one, if not of the other ; the first they called *cwrw*, which is the Welch name for ale at present.

The vice of drunkenness does not seem to have been general until the Danes and Saxons came among us ; and they brought not only the vice, but also the names of the liquors which were in most general use among them, mead and ale, and which have preserved the same appellations to the present times.

Mr. Strutt, in his history of the ancient Britons and Saxons, tells us, that intemperance in drinking was a prevailing vice, both among the Anglo-Saxons and Danes, with people of all ranks, in which they often spent whole days and nights without intermission ; all meetings, public and private, terminated in rioting and excessive drinking, not excepting religious festivals ; at which times it was usual for them to drink large draughts, in honour of Christ, the Virgin Mary, the Twelve Apostles, and other venerated saints. In the reign of Edgar the Peaceable, the vice of immoderate drinking prevailed so greatly, that laws were thought necessary to reform it ; and that prince, to prevent quarrels that arose in public-houses, from any one's drinking more than his share, which it seems was very frequent ; caused certain pegs or knobs to be put, at proper distances, into each drinking-cup ; and no man was to drink beyond those knobs at one draught, under a severe penalty ; which was also to be inflicted upon those who would compel others to drink

drink beyond them : he quotes William of Malmſbury, and Bartholinus, as his authorities.

But it cannot be ſuppoſed, that, by the expreſſion *public-houſes*, ſimilar places of entertainment to thoſe which now bear that general appellation can be intended ; becauſe we find, that above a century after the concluſion of the Saxon monarchy, by the death of Edward the Confefſor, public-houſes were not known, even in the metropolis : Fitzſtephen's Deſcription of the City of London, which is ſuppoſed to be written in 1174, mentioning the cuſtom of ſelling wines by retail, in *ſhips* and *vaults* ; and that there was only one public eating-houſe, or cook-ſhop : — “ *Præterea eſt in Lūdonia ſuper ripam fluminis, inter vina in navibus et cellariis venalia, publica Coquina.*”

About ninety-two years afterwards, appears the firſt inſtance of the attention of the legiſlature to our favourite beverage, ale ; in a ſtatute paſſed in the 51ſt year of the reign of Henry the Third, called *Aſſiſa Panis et Cereviſæ*. As much of the ſtatute as relates to *cereviſa*, or ale, follows in theſe words :

“ When a quarter of wheat is ſold for three ſhillings or three ſhillings and four-pence, and a quarter of barley for twenty-pence or two ſhillings, and a quarter of oats for ſixteen-pence, then brewers in cities ought, and may well afford, to ſell two gallons of beer, or ale, for a penny ; and, out of cities, to ſell three or four gallons for a penny ; and, when in a town, three gallons are ſold for a penny ; out of a town, they ought, and may, ſell four ; and this aſſize ought to be holden throughout all England.”

But by ſtatute the ſixth of the ſame year, called the Statute of the Pillorie and Tumbrel, it is enacted, — “ That, when a quarter of barley is ſold for two ſhillings, then four quarts of ale ſhall be ſold for a penny ; when for two ſhillings and fix-pence, then ſeven quarts for two-pence ; when for three ſhillings, then three quarts for one penny ; when for three ſhillings and fix-pence, then five quarts for two-pence ; when it is ſold for four ſhillings, then two quarts

at one penny; and so, from henceforth, the prices shall increase and decrease after the rate of six-pence."

Mr. Barrington, in his notes on these statutes, seems to be of opinion, that women, at this time, principally carried on this trade; and corroborates that opinion by the term *brachiatrix* being used: and also on the authority of Harrison, who, in his description of Britain in Queen Elizabeth's reign, speaks of *ale-wives* using deceits in brewing; and also because it is still said in Wales, that no one hath reason to expect good ale unless he lies with his brewer.

Although the statute proportions the price of ale, by measure, to the price of barley, it does not proportion the quantity of barley to the measure of ale; we must therefore suppose the quantity of barley used to a certain quantity of ale to be fixed, although we do not know, with certainty, what it was.

The first statute regulates the price of ale by the prices of wheat, barley, and oats: we have therefore reason to imagine that they were used indifferently, or perhaps altogether, in the composition of ale: and it appears that, in those days, not only wheat and barley, but also honey, was made use of for this purpose, the sheriff of Hampshire being allowed, in his accounts at the Exchequer, twenty-six shillings and ten-pence for *wheat, barley, and honey*, to make ale for the Duke of Saxony, in the 31st year of the reign of Henry the Second.*

L E T T E R XXXVIII.

DURING a period of several centuries, before the excesses of the people were made use of for the purpose of raising a revenue, it is no easy matter to find any anecdotes of ale-houses,

* Madox Hist. Excheq. vol. i. p. 369.

or their patrons, the intemperate. If drunkenness must ever remain one of the incorrigible vices of society, it is but fair that the purse of the drunkard should be drained its full proportion, for the general preservation of order and decorum, and that those who will not, by good example, add any thing to the general stock of morality, should pay for the preservation of order: it is, at the least, striking some sparks of good from a great mass of evil.

But, while general history and the laws are silent on the subject, some few lights are thrown upon it by Fleetwood, in his *Chronicon*.

The first instance is in 1302, when malt, ground, was three shillings and four-pence a quarter: wheat sold, at the same time, for four shillings, a quarter.

In 1309, at a feast given by Ralph de Born, prior of St. Austin's, in Canterbury, on his installation-day, malt was six shillings a quarter: at the same feast, wheat cost seven shillings and two-pence a quarter.

In 1315 and 1316, malt was thirteen shillings and four-pence a quarter: wheat, at the same time, was twenty shillings; and, by the rains in harvest, wheat came to thirty and forty shillings a quarter, and good ale to two-pence a gallon; the better sort to three-pence; the best of all to four-pence. On this a proclamation was issued, that a gallon of ale should be sold for a penny; and that no wheat should be malted (*imbrasiatum*), which the Londoners had usually done, to the great consumption of corn, and sold it (*i. e.* ale made of it) at three-halfpence a gallon; the viler ale at a penny.

In 1339, wheat and malt bore the same price, nine shillings a quarter.

In 1423, malt was five shillings a quarter; wheat, eight shillings.

In 1425, ale was from a penny to three-halfpence a gallon.

In

In 1440, malt was thirteen shillings a quarter; wheat, twenty-four shillings.

In 1444, malt, four shillings; wheat, four shillings and four-pence a quarter.

In 1445, ale was one penny halfpenny a gallon.

In 1451, ale was at the same price.

In 1453, ale, one penny farthing a gallon.

In 1455, malt, one shilling and five-pence a quarter; wheat, one shilling and two-pence; ale, one penny a gallon.

In 1457, wheat, seven shillings and eight-pence a quarter; ale, one penny a gallon.

In 1459, wheat, five shillings a quarter; ale, one penny a gallon.

In 1460, wheat, eight shillings a quarter; ale, one penny a gallon.

In 1504, wheat, five shillings and eight-pence a quarter; ale, about three-pence a gallon.

In 1551, wheat, eight shillings a quarter; malt, five shillings and a penny.

In 1553, wheat, the same; malt, five shillings a quarter.

In 1554, 1555, 1556, 1557, wheat and malt remained at the same price as in 1553; but Mr. Stow says, that in 1557, before harvest, wheat rose in London to two pounds thirteen shillings and four-pence a quarter; malt, to two pounds four shillings: and, after harvest, wheat sunk to five shillings; malt, to six shillings and eight-pence a quarter: while, in the country, wheat remained at four shillings a quarter; malt, at four shillings and eight-pence.

In 1561, wheat, the quarter, eight shillings; malt, five shillings.

From these notices, taken, at unequal intervals, through the period of two centuries and a half, very few, if any, certain conclusions ~~can be drawn~~, either with respect to the quantity of
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of the materials, or of the materials themselves, of which ale was in those days composed. Malt seems, in general, to bear a price somewhat proportional to the value of wheat; from which it also appears to have been sometimes made: but that proportion is so frequently broken through, especially in the year 1504, in the price of ale, that but little reliance can be placed on it.

The price of wheat and malt in 1557, in London, compared with its price in the country, strikes one as a remarkable instance of a deficiency of police in regulating the supply of the metropolis by its consumption; for, while the country enjoyed plenty, London experienced the advanced prices of a famine; the cause of which the history of the times does not sufficiently explain.

No price of hops is mentioned in Fleetwood, although the use of them had become general, and there had passed already one act of parliament regulating the importation of them. Mr. Pennant, in his *British Zoology*, quotes a distich to prove that carp and hops came into England the same year, viz. about 1514:

Turkies, carps, hops, pickerel, and beer,
Came into England all in one year.

And then produces an extract from "The Boke of St. Alban's," printed in 1496, to prove that carp was known here before. The regulations and establishment of the households of Henry Algernon Percy, the fifth Earl of Northumberland, at his castles of Wressell and Lekinfield, in Yorkshire, in 1512, will prove, also, that hops were in general use before the year allotted for their introduction into England by the distich; and will also shew the proportion of hops used to the malt.

"Hopps for brewinge. — To make provision for five hundred and fifty-six pounds of hopps for brewinge ~~of hump~~ ~~for the expenses~~ of

of my house for one whole yeere, after the estimation of thirteen shillings and four-pence the hundred.

“Malte. — To make provision for two hundred and nine quarters, one bushel, of malte, after four shillings the quarter, by estimation.”

This is at the rate of about two pounds eleven ounces of hops to a quarter of malt; but some ale was brewed in which the quantity of hops was much less than in beer; consequently, the proportion of hops to a quarter of malt in beer might be more considerable.

These notices are inserted rather as matters of curiosity than as information tending to throw much light on the progress of ale-houses and their concomitant ebriety: however, they at least tend to shew, that neither the vice, nor the consumption of liquor which it occasioned, had as yet been sufficiently attended to by the legislature to occasion them either to regulate the immorality, or to raise a revenue from licensing its continuation.

In the mean time, houses of entertainment increased in number, and also in licentiousness. In the fourteenth century, Chaucer, in his *Canterbury Tales*, makes us acquainted with a considerable inn, at which the palmers spent a night, in their pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Thomas, at Canterbury:

“ In Southwerke at the Tabberd* as I lay,
 “ Redy to wendin on my pilgrimage
 “ To Canterbury with devote corage,
 * * * * *
 “ The chambers and the stables werin wide,
 “ And well we werin esed at the best.”

* *Tabberd*. — A jacket, or sleeveless coat, worn formerly by noblemen, in the wars; now only by heralds: it was the sign of an inn in Southwark; it is now the sign of the Talbot. — *Urry's Glossary to Chaucer*.

His host was like a host of modern days,

“ Bold of his speeche, and wife, and well taught,
 “ And of manhode lakkid him right naught:
 “ And eke thereto he was a *mery* man.”

Shakspeare, who drew from nature, has also left us strong traits of character in his Hostels of Eastcheap: he, in the beginning of the seventeenth century, gives us several instances of the manners of inn-keepers towards the end of the fourteenth: the First and Second Parts of his King Henry the Fourth abound with them.

But we want not the instances; we stand not in need of the hint; we know that no man can be a vender of any commodity, who is not in his heart an encourager of the consumption of it.

Very early in the sixteenth century, in the nineteenth year of the reign of Henry the Seventh, the bad effects of the common sale of ale and beer were so sensibly felt, as to occasion parliament to restrain the practice, and to authorize two justices of the peace to reject such ale-houses, as they shall think proper. This appears to be the first instance of the interference of the legislature.

The next is about fifty years afterwards, in the reign of Edward the Sixth, the preamble to which has been already noticed in a former part of this tract. This first gives to two justices the power of licensing ale-houses or tippling-houses, and directs them to take bond and recognizance of such as shall be admitted to keep them, as well against the using of unlawful games as for the maintenance of good order; it punishes the venders of ale without licence, (except in the time of fairs,) by imprisonment, and recognizance with two sureties, not to offend in the same manner again.

After the lapse of another fifty years, parliament again, in the first year of the reign of James the First, found it necessary to interfere in the conduct of ale-houses. The preamble to the act recites, with great propriety, their true use; “ for the receipt, relief, and

lodging, of way-faring people, and for the supply of the wants of such people as are not able to make their provision of victuals, and not for the entertainment of the idle to consume their money and time in a drunken manner."

This act not only punishes the alehouse-keeper, by a penalty of ten shillings to the poor, who suffers any person to remain tippling, "other than such as shall be invited by any traveller, and shall accompany him during his necessary abode there; and other than labouring and handicraftsmen in cities and towns corporate, and market-towns, upon the usual working-days, for one hour at dinner-time, to take their diet in an ale-house; and other than labourers and workmen, which, for the following of their work by the day, or by the great, shall, for the time of continuing their work there, sojourn, lodge, or victual, in any inn, ale-house, or other victualling-house;" but also inflicts a penalty of forty shillings, to be paid to the use of the poor, on the constables and church-wardens for neglect of duty, in not levying the penalty on the alehouse-keeper offending; and also regulates the price at which ale and beer shall be sold, viz. one full quart of the best ale or beer for a penny, and two quarts of the small; and, if any alehouse-keeper sell less, he forfeits twenty shillings. The penalties to be levied by the constables or church-wardens.

In the 4th year of the same reign, parliament again was compelled to attend to ale-houses; — "whereof," the preamble to the act says, "the multitudes and the abuses are become intolerable, and still do and are likely to increase." To prevent the evil, no person shall sell, utter, or deliver, any beer or ale, to any person not having a license to sell ale or beer, except for the convenient use and expense of his household, under the penalty of six shillings and eight-pence for every barrel.

And, by the next chapter, entitled, An Act for repressing the odious and loathsome Sin of Drunkenness, after making use of the following strong language as a preamble:

"Whereas

“Whereas the loathsome and odious sin of drunkenness is, of late, grown into common use within this realm, being the root and foundation of many other enormous sins, as blood-shed, stabbing, murder, swearing, fornication, adultery, and such like, to the great dishonour of God and of our nation, the overthrow of many good arts and manual trades, the disabling of divers workmen, and the impoverishing of many good subjects, abusively wasting the good creatures of God.”

The act inflicts a penalty of five shillings on every person convicted of drunkenness; three shillings and four-pence on every person who shall remain drinking and tippling in any ale-house in the city, town, village, or hamlet, where he lives. If any person shall be a second time convicted of drunkenness, he shall be bound, with two sureties, to the king, for his good behaviour, in the penalty of ten pounds. *

And these offences shall be inquired of, and presented before justices of assize, justices of the peace in their quarter-sessions, mayors, bailiffs, and other head-officers of cities, towns, &c. by all constables, church-wardens, headboroughs, tithing-men, ale-conners, and sidemen: the penalties are to go to the poor of the parish. The act was farther enforced, and made perpetual, by the 1st of Car. I. cap. 4.

Three years afterwards, the attention of the legislature was again called forth, and any alehouse-keeper, being convicted of any offence committed against either of these two acts, entitled, An Act to restrain haunting and tippling in Inns, Ale-houses, and other Victualling-Houses; and the Act against the Sin of Drunkenness; shall be disabled from keeping an ale-house for three years following such conviction.

And, by the 21st statute of this reign, chapter the seventh, the two last acts, which were at first only temporary, are made perpetual; and proof, by one witness only, is rendered necessary; and that one witness may be a person who has voluntarily confessed that

himself has been guilty of the offence; a kind of evidence to which recourse ought never to be had, except in those instances of enormous crimes, where, for the safety of society, the conviction of an offender is necessary.

In the 1st year of Charles the First, foreigners, or persons not inhabiting in the towns or villages within which they shall be convicted of tippling in any ale-house, were made also liable to the penalty, which they were not liable to by the acts passed in the last parliament; and the alehouse-keepers, who shall permit them to tittle, are also made liable to the same penalties as they were by former acts, with respect to the inhabitants; as are also vintners, keepers of taverns, and victuallers; and they are taken to be within the two former acts, and also within the statute then passed. Chapter 4.

By the statute, the 3d of Charles the First, chapter the fourth, reciting, in the preamble, that the act, made in the 5th year of Edward the Sixth, had not wrought such reformation as was intended, for that the fines were seldom levied, and many of the offenders are neither able to pay them, nor to bear their own charges of committing to gaol; therefore it is enacted, that he, who keeps an ale-house without license, shall forfeit twenty shillings, which the constables or church-wardens shall levy for the use of the poor; which, if the party is not able to pay, he shall be whipped; and, for the second offence, he shall be committed to the house of correction, for the space of one month, there to be dealt with as a disorderly person, and, if he shall again offend, and be again convicted, he shall be committed to the house of correction, there to remain until discharged by order of the justices in their general sessions.

Throughout the reign of James, and in the beginning of the reign of Charles the First, the legislature appears to have taken every means that penalties, imprisonment, and disgrace, could effect, to prevent the bad consequences arising from ale-houses and drunkenness. In fact, the evil had been severely felt for several centuries,

centuries, and had been attended to by government from the year 1503 to the date of the last-mentioned act, 1627, but without effect: ale-houses increased in number, and their frequenters in drunkenness, indolence, and licentiousness; and, although the laws respecting them were severe, they were deficient, no proper means having been provided to compel their execution; and were then, as the last act states, what we at present find them to be, — seldom or never put in force.

This seems to have been the last attempt of the legislature to regulate the moral conduct of ale-houses, and to prevent the bad effects of ebriety: and these several acts of parliament still remain the law, although, unfortunately for the cause of morality and economy, not the practice.

L E T T E R XXXIX.

AS yet the public revenue had not been considerably benefited by popular depravity; at least the money arising from the licensing ale-houses had not enriched the coffers of the state, but had filled the pockets of those minions of the crown who had sufficient interest at court to obtain the privilege of granting them, a remarkable instance of which occurred in the year 1621, when the House of Commons received many petitions against some grants which the king had made to certain individuals of the power of licensing inns and ale-houses; and which he declared, in his speech in the House of Lords, it was his intention to recal, having, till then, been ignorant of the ill effects which such patents had occasioned.

Soon after the restoration of Charles the Second, in the year 1660, parliament granted, among other profits arising from articles
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of excise, those on beer, ale, mead, cider, perry, and foreign spirits, in augmentation of the royal revenue.

In the 9th of Queen Anne, a duty of four shillings was laid on any piece of vellum, parchment, or paper, on which shall be engrossed a license for retailing of wine; and one shilling on a similar license for retailing of beer and ale, or other excisable liquors.

And, by the 6th of George the First, all persons, whose office it shall be to take any recognizances on account of ale-licenses, shall be obliged to make out such ale-licenses on paper duly stamped, before they take the recognizances, under the penalty of ten pounds.

In the beginning of the next reign, parliament took into consideration the inconvenience which had arisen from persons being licensed to keep inns and common ale-houses by justices of the peace; who, living remote from the places of abode of such persons, might not be truly informed of the want of such inns and ale-houses, or of the characters of persons applying for licenses; and therefore enacted, by statute 2d, chapter 28, and section 11, "That no license shall be granted but at a general meeting of the justices, acting in the division where the persons applying for licenses dwell, on the 21st of September, or twenty days after, or at any other general meeting of the said justices, to be holden for the division wherein the said person resides; and that all licenses granted otherwise shall be void."

And, by the 26th of George the Second, chapter 31st, the above-mentioned clause is repealed; and the manner of licensing ale-houses, in that part of Great Britain called England, is regulated: and it is ordered, "that no license to keep any ale-house, &c. shall be granted to any person not licensed the year preceding, unless such person shall produce, at the general meeting of the justices in September, a certificate under the hands of the parson, vicar,

vicar, or curate, and the major part of the church-wardens and overseers, or else of three or four reputable and substantial householders and inhabitants of the parish, or place, where such ale-house is to be, setting forth that such person is of good fame, and sober life and conversation; and it shall be mentioned, in such license, that such certificate was produced, otherwise the license shall be void."

It remains to be observed, that, to prevent any license from being obtained on motives of interest in the magistrates, by their being concerned in habits of trade with the person licensed, no justice of the peace, being a brewer, inn-keeper, or distiller, or a seller of, or a dealer in, ale or spirituous liquors, or interested in any of the said trades, or being a maltster or victualler, shall be capable of granting licenses to sell ale or beer, by virtue of an act of parliament passed in the same year.

By this long category of pains, penalties, and restrictions, has the legislature attempted, through the lapse of near three centuries, to prevent the ill effects of ale-houses on the morals, the industry, and the economy, of the people; but they have attempted it in vain; and the government, not having been able to preserve our poor in habits of sobriety, has determined that the revenue should feel the good effects of public vice; and, therefore, by a variety of taxes on these commodities, the consumption of which is so general, and which taxes having increased nearly *pari passu* with the stamp-duties on the ale-licenses, (viz. from one shilling, in the reign of Queen Anne, to one-and-thirty shillings and sixpence, in the 24th year of the present reign, besides the duty on the house itself, if at a rent above fifteen pounds a year,) have raised from the public, in the four quarters of the year ending the 10th of October, 1792, the vast sum of five millions two hundred and nineteen thousand seven hundred and fifty-one pounds, as may be seen by the following extract from a statement presented to the House
of

of Commons, pursuant to an act of the 27th year of his Majesty's reign.*

Net-Produced of the Duties of Excise in England.

On beer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	£2,012,373
Hops	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	82,776
Malt, perpetual duty	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	612,235
Spirits, British	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	644,104
Ditto, foreign	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	704,392
Licenses to retailers of spirituous liquors	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	160,704
Duties commenced	{	Spirits, British						111,307
5th Jan. 1791.		Ditto, foreign						142,737
		Malt						118,033
Annual malt, &c.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	607,200
								<hr/>
								5,195,861
Customs on gin	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	23,890
								<hr/>
								5,219,751

When it is considered that none of that immense quantity of gin and malt spirits, which are smuggled into this country clear of all duties, and also none of the customs on foreign brandy, rum, and foreign wines, are taken into this account, which, alone, amount to upwards of seven hundred and fourteen thousand pounds; because these are liquors that we may suppose are drunk exclusively by the people of property, and are not generally the beverage of the common people; and, also, because we cannot, in such a general estimate as is here attempted to be made, state accurately how great a proportion of these commodities, which are excised,

* Annals of Agriculture, vol. xx. p. 100, 97.

is exported: we may, therefore, for an instant suppose, that the quantity exported, together with the consideration that foreign wines, brandy, and rum, are not the general drink of the mass of the people, will leave the sum-total of the duties of excise, together with the customs on gin, amounting to £5,219,751, a fair average annual tax, paid, by the people of England, for the liquor drank by eight millions five hundred thousand subjects, men, women, and children. This being allowed to be a probable average, where exactness cannot be pretended to, it will then appear, that each individual pays to the revenue for his beer, ale, spirits, and strong liquors, exclusive of the customs on foreign wines, brandy, and rum, above twelve shillings and three-pence farthing annually.

It can scarcely be supposed, that the sum paid by the consumers for these liquors can be short of five times the tax which government has laid on them; although the absolute proof that it is so (were such a proof possible) would be too tedious an investigation for this cursory inquiry: but, if either the article of ale or of spirits be separately examined, with respect to its tax and its retail price, it is imagined the proportion mentioned will be found to be far within the truth. We shall then perceive, that each individual expends above three pounds one shilling and four-pence farthing in that indulgence which Adam Smith does not reckon among the necessities of life.

Now let us have recourse to Mr. Howlett's computation of the number of labouring poor individuals in England, — six millions and a quarter, — these forming that class of the people for whom the poor's rates are raised; and it will be found that their expenditure in ale, beer, and spirituous liquors, will considerably exceed nineteen millions.

Nor can this be deemed an extravagant computation; when it is remembered, that the consumption of wines, and also that consumption of brandy and rum, which may be calculated as attach-

ing itself to the customs on those spirits, are, in this calculation, supposed to belong exclusively to the remainder of that population; which is calculated to amount, in the whole, to eight millions and a half, or to two millions and one quarter only of our fellow-subjects; the six millions and one quarter of the labouring-poor being deducted.

To compute the yearly earnings of the poor throughout England, is a matter infinitely above my ability; and to guess at them is taking a leap so much in the dark, as would be an imputation on the prudence of any man. Mr. King, in 1668, computed the income of labourers and out-servants at fifteen pounds a year, to a family consisting of three and a half persons; Chief-Justice Hale, about the same time, computed the expenses of a labourer's family, of six persons, at twenty-six pounds a year; supposing either of these computations nearly right at that time; and supposing the price of wages to be now double; and the expenses of a labourer's family, of the same number of persons, to be double; and more than that they cannot be; it will be found that the expenses of the ale-house will consume no inconsiderable proportion of a labourer's wages, and bear a large proportion to the total of his expenses.

Therefore, it must be apparent, that one great and leading source of the evil we complain of, in the state of the poor of this country, may be traced hence; from the vast sums which are spent in these licensed places of ebriety; which are so many in number, that it is a matter of surprise how the keepers of them can get a livelihood; by honest and sober conduct they could not; but it must be by an improper solicitation for drunken customers, by giving them credit for liquor, and encouraging them in bad habits; it appearing that the number of ale, spirit, and wine, licenses is, to the number of inhabitants, nearly as one to ninety; therefore, the profit on the expenses of a number, much short of ninety people, for strong liquors, enables a man, not only to support himself,
family,

family, and servants, but also, in many instances, to acquire a fortune; for, it should be mentioned, to the credit of our countrymen, that of ninety individuals, men, women, and children, probably half of them scarcely ever taste strong liquors, and are certainly no customers to ale-house-keepers.

The cause of a disease being known, it has been said, he must be either an ignorant or timid physician who knows not what remedy to prescribe, or, knowing it, is fearful of applying it.

If time lost, and the money spent, in the indulgence of drinking-habits, be in any degree the cause of the distresses of the poor, and of the increase of the rate for their relief and maintenance; it is plain that, in proportion as the opportunity of indulging in these habits is diminished, the bad effects of them will disappear; and it is an experimental truth, that, in proportion as you cease to indulge a habit, does the habit itself disappear.

It is true, a patient, whose constitution has been injured by drinking, may at first conceive he cannot exist without his usual indulgence:—but what will his physician prescribe? Probably not an immediate and total abstinence from strong liquors, but a gradual reduction of the quantity, and of the frequency of the indulgence: the patient, in the mean time, finds health return, his constitution is strengthened, and the bad habit is weakened; and, in the end, he perceives that health and sobriety are not incompatible.

In the same manner should the physicians of the state proceed with their patients,—the people; not by encouraging the means of indulgence, and restraining the *practice* by pains and penalties; these we know, by the experience of some centuries, have no effect; it is like holding a rod and a cherry to a child; the one will be eaten, and the other ought not, on such an occasion, to be used; neither ought the pains and penalties, in the various statutes respecting ebriety, to be inflicted, until the temptation is farther removed. If a labouring-man has but to step over his own threshold to the next door to indulge himself in drinking, it requires some

philosophy, while he has either money or credit, to refrain : oblige him to go a considerable distance, and he will not so often yield to the temptation.

If parliament should order a *census* of the people to be taken, by an actual numeration of them, by the constables of each parish, who might return the number to the high-constables, and they to the quarter-sessions in each county, and by a similar method in cities ; the actual population of the kingdom might easily be known.

The number of ale, spirit, and wine, licenses might also be known from the excise-office.

Whatever be the proportion that the number of these licenses bears to the amount of the population at present ; if that proportion should be decreased one-third by an experimental act of parliament for three years, the effect of such an experiment upon the morals of the people, the distresses of the poor, the poor's rates, and also upon the revenue, in respect to the produce of the duties of excise, would be known ; and, if it was on the whole advantageous to the morals, to the poor, and the rate for their maintenance was diminished, the experiment should be persisted in by a farther decrease of the proportion, between the number of people and the number of licenses, for the next three years, and so on, until the point be found, beyond which the decrease would be prejudicial.

In such an experiment, undoubtedly the good effect proposed would be opposed by a diminution of the revenue which arises from these articles of the excise ; for, it is plain, that the smaller the consumption of strong liquors, the less the revenue arising from that consumption ; and, the smaller the number of licenses, the less the produce of that branch of the revenue : but, if the end of government be the good of the governed, can this be an objection ? Surely not, unless revenue is of more consequence to a state than the morals, the religion, the happiness, of its subjects.

If the revenue should prove deficient, through the experiment, and it could not, unless the experiment succeeded, would it not gain by other and better means? If the quantity of national drunkenness, indolence, and expensiveness in the articles of liquors, was diminished, would not the quantity of national morality, industry, and economy, be increased? And, in such a case, would not agriculture and manufactures restore that defalcation to the revenue, occasioned by a suppression of the habits of indulgence in drinking?

If a diminution of the number of ale-houses had no effect upon the habits of our fellow-subjects, but that the man, who would frequent one at his door, would do the same at a mile distance;—still some good will arise from the experiment: being fewer houses, each house will have more custom, and will not be tempted to encourage the habit in their customers, by the risk of trusting them: an ale-house-score does not increase in the simple ratio of the quantity drank, but in the compound proportion of the quantity drank, and the hazard incurred by giving credit.

Another advantage would accrue: the number being less, the conduct of those which remained might be better attended to, and the haunts of ebriety and dissoluteness might be brought more directly under the eye of the peace-officers; and, if the experiment was attended with a general revision of the statutes respecting them, the penalties might be put in a way of being levied without expecting neighbours, companions, or friends, to turn informers.

But the number of ale-houses being diminished, and, by that means, the custom at the remaining houses being increased, they could afford to pay more for their ale, wine, and spirit, licenses; and that not only in proportion to the decrease of the number, but because the additional custom they get will be free of house-rent and house-keeping; therefore, if this regulation should not diminish the quantity of liquor consumed, it will increase the revenue; and, if it should diminish the quantity consumed, it will proportionably increase

increase the habits of sobriety, industry, and economy, which are better for the governed than revenue.

On the whole, it appears to be a truth plainly proved, that the wretched situation of the poor, and the expenses of their maintenance, are, in a great degree, increased by their habitual fondness of drinking, which induces laziness, want of economy, and that apathy or indifference to what may happen, which is the consequence of habits of ebriety, as it also is sometimes of excess of distress: it has also been proved, that, from the time when ale-houses were first licensed, the legislature has frequently complained of the bad effects to the morals and habits of the poor, from the encouragement these, their favourite haunts, gave to drinking and laziness: and it also appears, that the legislature has frequently interfered by penal statutes to prevent these consequences; but without effect.

It therefore now becomes their wisdom to try some other means: if the evil so long and so often complained of not only still exists, but is increasing; and, as the legislature of this country has, for near three centuries, found, by experience, that, with respect to penalties, the acts of the state are become a dead letter, and the statutes of the realm are disregarded; — that, in the mean time, the number of licenses, and the quantity of liquor consumed, are amazingly increased; and the consequential habits among the lower class of people have occasioned their maintenance and relief to become a serious burthen to that class of his majesty's subjects, which is next in number, as well as importance, to the state; — a diminution of the number of houses licensed for the sale of liquors is, therefore, the experiment which should now be tried, — an experiment which, if it should be somewhat injurious to the revenue *immediately*, will be *mediately* advantageous; and, at all events, beneficial to the community: — and, if the experiment should not be beneficial to the community, it cannot injure the revenue.

L E T T E R X L.

THERE are very few human institutions, respecting the propriety of which there do not exist two opinions, the good and the bad: the for and the against are so interwoven in all our schemes and plans, that it is scarcely possible to find any existing establishment, in which, while one man or set of men sees nothing but good, another will see nothing but evil. The fair conclusion to be drawn is, that, in all our plans, institutions, and establishments, there exist both good and evil; but, as we will suppose they are generally established with a view to good, that evil which does not naturally, and consequentially, arise from them, but only proceeds from a misuse, or misapplication, should not be estimated as necessarily inherent in the plan. The evil, in this respect, resembles gluttony and drunkenness: no one but will allow that meat and drink are a necessary good, although the misuse of them produces those vices. In a former part of this tract box-clubs, or friendly societies, have been glanced at, and recommended, as tending to diminish the poor's rate: that they have that tendency, the very essence of their rules will prove; because their fund is created by a voluntary contribution among the members of the club, while in health, to support each other, by a weekly allowance, when diseased or disabled by accidents or age; without which allowance the majority of the members of most of them would receive a weekly support from the parish-rates. But it may be said they encourage drinking; for, in general, their meetings are held at a public-house, and, probably, instances may be produced where individuals have returned from their monthly or quarterly meetings intoxicated: and it also may be hinted, that their annual meeting, when they dine together, too frequently
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is a feast of intemperance. For my own part, I believe that all feasts are feasts of intemperance, both of the poor and the rich. But it should be added to the account, that, at feasts in general, every person is left at liberty to drink or not. At these societies, one of the first standing rules is against drunkenness; therefore that vice is neither the object of these clubs, nor of the members; and instances of it may be classed under the idea of misuse.

Another objection may be, and has been, made to them, viz. that they may be applied to bad, seditious, and turbulent, purposes. It is allowed to be possible; and, more especially, in manufacturing-towns; and there is no doubt but that instances of the kind have happened; that journeymen to different trades, in populous cities and towns, may have combined against their masters; may have refused to work but at a certain price; that seditious and treasonable toasts may have been drunk at these meetings; and that riot and disorder may have proceeded from the door of the public-house they frequent. It should be recollected that these instances only prove, where they have existed, an abuse of these societies; and are, by no means, a natural consequence flowing from the right use of them.

But be that as it may: the particular purport of these sheets respects the labouring-poor; the day-labourer in husbandry, not the mechanic, the artizan, or the manufacturing-poor, any farther than as they are involved in the general consideration of those who may become a burthen on society for their maintenance; and these abuses of friendly societies have not as yet been found prevalent where this description of men constitutes the majority of the club. The country-village, or market-town, whose inhabitants do not rise to opulence by manufactures, has not produced any other than good effects from friendly societies: among such bodies of men, therefore, they certainly tend to good, as far as their rules tend to good order, and the fund they voluntarily raise tends to relieve them
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in cases of illness and distress, when otherwise the relief must proceed from the poor's rate.

And the legislature has acted from the same opinion : nay more ; it has proceeded from an opinion of the *general* good they do to society, throughout the kingdom, in all places, and under all considerations ; as well in the populous manufacturing-towns as in the deserted villages. The parliament has acted upon a general principle ; and applaud and encourage when the good is general, influenced by a sentiment similar to that of the candid Critic :

Verum ubi plura nitent non ego paucis
Offendar maculis, quas aut incuria fudit
Aut humana parùm cavit natura.

The act of parliament, which passed, in the last session, for the encouragement of friendly societies, authorizes me to assert that parliament approves of them generally, both by the preamble to the act, and by the solid and considerable encouragement given to them in the body of the act, only subjecting their rules to the inspection and approbation of the justices at their quarter-sessions.

The preamble to this wise and humane act of parliament states, that whereas the protection and encouragement of friendly societies, in this kingdom, for raising, by voluntary subscription of the members thereof, separate funds for the mutual relief and maintenance of the said members, in sickness, old age, and infirmity, is likely to be attended with very beneficial effects, by promoting the happiness of individuals, and, at the same time, diminishing the public burthens. May it, therefore, please your Majesty that it may be enacted,

Sec. 1. That any number of persons may form themselves into a society, and raise among themselves a fund for their mutual benefit, and make rules, impose fines, &c.

Sec. 2 and 3. That such rules shall be exhibited to the justices, in quarter-sessions, who may annul or confirm them ; and, if con-

firmed, that they shall be signed by the clerk of the peace, and be deposited with him; and, until their rules are so confirmed, no society shall be within the meaning of the act, and no confirmed rule shall be altered but at a general meeting of the society, and the alteration shall be subject to the review of the quarter-sessions.

Sec. 5. Such society may appoint officers; and securities shall be given, if required. The treasurers shall give bond to the clerk of the peace, and other officers to the treasurer; and the bonds shall not be chargeable with stamp-duty.

Sec. 6. Committees may be appointed, whose powers, if standing-committees, shall be declared in the rules of the society; and, if particular ones, shall be entered in a book, and shall be controllable by the society.

Sec. 7, 8, and 9. The treasurers or trustees shall lay out the surplus of contributions, and bring the proceeds to account for the use of the society, shall render accounts, and pay over-balances; and, in case of neglect, application may be made to the Court of Chancery, &c. and no fee shall be taken for such proceedings in any court.

Sec. 10 and 11. Executors shall pay money due to these societies before any other debts; and the effects of these societies shall be vested in the treasurers, or trustees, for the time being, who may bring and defend actions.

Sec. 12. But the societies must declare the purpose of their establishment before the confirmation of their rules by the court of quarter-sessions; and the uses to which the money subscribed shall be applied; and may inflict penalties for misapplication of money; and shall not be dissolved, unless by the consent of five-sixths of the then-existing members, and of all persons receiving, or entitled to receive, relief from the society; and their stock shall not be devisable but for the general purposes of the society.

Sec. 13 and 14. Their rules shall be entered in a book, and received in evidence, and they may receive donations of any persons out of the society, which shall be applied to the purposes of the society.

Sec. 15 and 16. Where any members think themselves aggrieved, they may apply on oath to two or more justices, near to the place where such society is established, who are empowered to act, and make such order therein, as they shall think fit; but if, by the rules of any society, any matter shall be left to arbitration, the award of the arbitrators shall be final.

Sec. 17, 18, 19, 20. No member of a society producing a certificate thereof, shall be removeable from the parish where such society is established, until he is actually chargeable to that parish. These certificates shall be proved by oath of one of the witnesses attesting them, before a magistrate; and, on complaint of parish-officers, justices may summon persons bringing certificates to be examined, and to make oath of their settlement; and copies of these examinations shall be given to the parties, which shall exempt them from future examination; and justices may declare, by an order in writing, the place of settlement of persons so examined, without issuing a warrant for their removal; and copies of such orders and of examinations shall be returned to the parish-officers of the place of settlement.

Sec. 21, 22, 23, 24, 25. Persons, aggrieved by the adjudication of justices, may appeal to the quarter-sessions, and no person residing in any parish under this act shall thereby gain a settlement, nor by paying of rates, nor any apprentice or servant to such person; but bastards shall have the same settlement as the mother, who shall reside in any parish, by virtue of this act.

Sec. 26. The charges of maintaining or removing residents, under this act, to be reimbursed by the parish to which the parties belong. The act to be deemed a public act.

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This act of parliament will probably be productive of more good to the nation in general, than that enlightened and humane member of parliament,* from whom the bill originated, conceived; unless, while he intended to raise a revenue from the poor, in aid of the poor's rates, and for the support of themselves, he, with the spirit of prophecy, foretold, from the effect of this act, the gradual decline, and, in the end, the downfall, of that servile and expensive system, the law of settlements. No one act of the legislature respecting the poor since the first corner-stone of the system, the 43d of Elizabeth, is so replete with good; it holds out to them every encouragement, and only restrains, as societies or clubs, protected by the legislature, ought to be restrained, from doing mischief to that very government which protects, encourages, and rewards, them. The compliance with the requisition of exhibiting their rules to the justices at the quarter-sessions is easy and free of expense; the preservers of the peace of the county are, at the same time, the natural judges of what rules may be inimical to that peace; the encouragement is substantial; and the members of these clubs see it; for they crowd to have their rules recorded by the clerk of the peace; and the poor in general know the advantages; for they are solicitous to become members of friendly societies.

* At the time this letter was written, the author was ignorant that the poor in particular, and the county in general, were obliged to George Rose, Esq. M. P. one of the joint secretaries to the Treasury, for this most excellent act of parliament; nor was he then personally known to that gentleman, but has now every reason to congratulate his county, that, by the strong and comprehensive abilities of Mr. Pitt, applied to the subject of these letters, aided by the thorough knowledge and indefatigable attention of Mr. Rose, together with those other honourable members of the House of Commons, who attended Mr. Pitt many times through the month of February, 1796, on the subject of the poor-laws, it is to be expected, that at length the nation will receive the benefit of an act of parliament, which may turn the present tide of idleness and dissipation among the poor to industrious habits and a more moral line of conduct.

L E T T E R X L I .

IN the nineteenth volume of the Annals of Agriculture, are the rules of a friendly society, instituted under the patronage of several gentlemen, whom the poor of a parish in Norfolk have the happiness to call their neighbours and friends; which rules appear to be very well adapted to the purposes of such friendly societies in general; more especially because the control of them is by these rules invested in the gentlemen of opulence in the place, together with the clergyman; and because the times of their meeting at a public-house are restrained to the four quarters of the year, and two feasts, (possibly that might be better altered to one,) instead of obliging the members to meet monthly. The only article in which these rules appear to be materially deficient is, that the club does not in any form of words declare the purposes of its establishment, although they may certainly be collected from the general body of the rules. A copy of these rules and orders shall be added; as they may tend to assist any person, into whose hands these pages may fall, in establishing a similar society, on a better principle, and with better regulations, than those usually drawn up for such occasions; and the purpose of the society shall be properly declared according to the direction of the act of parliament, called the Friendly-Society Act.

Rules and orders agreed upon to be observed by the members of a friendly society, instituted the day of , in the year , for the purpose of raising, by voluntary subscription of the members thereof, and other charitable persons who may be inclined to give contributions thereto, a fund for the mutual relief and maintenance of the said members in sickness, accidents, infirmity, and old age.

Art. 1. That no person, after the first quarter-day after the establishment of this society, exceeding the age of forty-five years,

nor

nor any person having any apparent infirmity of mind or distemper of body, shall ever be admitted a member.

2. That on the Saturday before the full moon preceding the four principal quarterly days of the year, shall be held the ordinary meeting, in the evening, from seven to nine in the summer, and from six to eight in the winter.

3. That no person shall ever be admitted a member but at ~~one~~ of the quarterly meetings, and by the majority of the trustees present, as well as by a majority of the other members.

4. That every member is to be present at the said quarterly meetings, and to pay four-pence towards the reckoning of that evening; or, having some reasonable excuse which may be transmitted to the society by the clerk, and shall be admitted as such by the majority present, the clerk shall tender, for each, four-pence; or, if the excuse be not deemed valid, then the member, so absent shall pay one shilling. The said penalties to be put into the common stock.

5. That whoever desires to be admitted into this society shall appear at one of the said quarterly meetings, and if then and there, as above approved of, he shall pay down one guinea, (besides the four-pence to be spent,) towards maintaining the common stock or fund, and thereby he shall become a full member: but, if not then capable to pay the whole, he must pay on each quarterly day, besides the four-pence for expense, for the months immediately preceding, one shilling per month to the stock, and so to be continued for twenty-one weekly months, and not to receive any benefit from the fund till the whole twenty-one shillings is paid.

6. That there shall be two feasts in the year; the one on the quarterly meeting before Christmas, and the other on the Saturday before Whit-Sunday, and, in order to abridge the loss of time as much as possible, the dinners not to be ready before three o'clock, as by that time, with a little management, the day's work may be finished; for which feasts every member shall, on admittance, pay one

one shilling, and clear his club-arrears, if any be due, besides the payment of his wonted subscription, or be excluded; by which arrears is hereby explained to be meant, a regular payment of one shilling for every weekly month during the continuance of this society, to be put into the common box or fund.

7. And, for the better regulating the affairs of this society, the following trustees are hereby appointed, viz.

or the heirs of the said gentlemen, as, proprietors of their estates in the said parish, and the rector or vicar of the said parish, for the time being, upon condition that each of the said gentlemen, their heirs or successors, shall pay two guineas towards the common stock or box, as qualifying themselves for the trust hereby reposed in them.

8. That the majority of the said trustees shall either personally act, or choose two stewards out of the members of the club, to receive and pay all the money belonging to this society, taking receipts for whatever they pay; and if the said stewards, or either of them, shall be found guilty of any breach of trust in their office, or of fraudulently converting to any other use than that of the society any sum or sums of money, or shall make any false or unjust account thereof, they the said stewards shall, upon discovery, be forthwith discharged of their office, and expelled the society; and the aforesaid trustees shall be accountable for, and shall make good, every embezzlement or injury the society may, through the neglect or fault of themselves, or their stewards, have sustained; and the said trustees, or their stewards, shall attend the society before the first half-hour of each quarterly meeting is expired, or the stewards shall each forfeit one shilling to the box or common stock.

9. For the security of the cash or other public stock of the society, there shall be prepared a convenient box, with three locks and three keys, each of different constructions from the other, and each of the stewards to have a key, and the master of the house where the box is kept shall be in possession of the third; and there shall
always

always be kept by the clerk a regular cash-book, and the copy of each day's receipt or expense, to be locked up in the box, which is not to be opened, nor any money to be taken out, but at the said quarterly meetings; the money in the mean time wanted by the sick members, to be supplied by the trustees, or their stewards.

10. Every person, become a full member of this society, if he falls sick, lame, or blind, so as to become incapable of following his trade or employ, after seven days notice given to the stewards and apothecary, or one of them, shall receive out of the box or common stock, if confined to his bed, a weekly allowance of five shillings and sixpence; but, if able to go about, not more than four shillings, till he shall be so far recovered as to follow his trade or employ, provided that his sickness or lameness does not continue longer than one whole year; but, if it does, then he shall receive two shillings and sixpence a week, for as long a time as he shall be afflicted; but, if any such member shall recover before the seven days notice is expired, he will not be entitled to any weekly allowance.

11. In case the stewards shall have sickness, urgent business, or be otherwise disabled, with reasonable cause, the trustees may appoint some other member (for whom likewise they are to be responsible) to officiate or act in their stead.

12. Whereas an apothecary will be constantly employed for the service of this society, and is to be paid out of the common stock, and every other proper case recommended to the county-hospital,* it is hereby farther agreed, that every member (the clerk excepted) shall pay sixpence, at the first quarterly meeting after the accident happened, into the fund, towards paying the extraordinary expense that may occur upon any one of the members which may break a bone, leg, arm, &c. (except by drunkenness, wrestling, football-playing, &c.) or for want of such payment be excluded; and during

* If there is one in the county.

the time any member receives money from the box, he shall be excluded all payments to the box or house, except upon deaths, feasts, and broken bones.

13. Whenever any member dies, all the members are to attend his funeral, and all (the clerk excepted, who is to give notice of the burial) shall contribute, at the first quarterly meeting after the funeral, sixpence each, towards defraying the expenses of his funeral, &c. and every member, who does not so attend, shall pay on the subsequent quarterly night one shilling into the box, or, in defect of either of those payments, to be for the future excluded; except the case of the small-pox, when no attendance will be required.

14. Whenever any member dies, there shall be allowed out of the box for his burial one guinea and a half; and, if he has a widow or children, to them two guineas.

15. And, on the death of every full member's lawful wife, the husband, giving notice to the stewards, shall receive one guinea and a half from the box, (if demanded,) the said quarterly meeting-night after her decease, towards paying the funeral-charges; upon which occasion every member shall, on the same night, or whenever they appear, pay three-pence towards it, or be excluded.

16. The stewards shall each go once in seven days to visit each sick member, and shall be allowed for each visit, at the next meeting, sixpence, if no complaint shall be by the sick preferred against him or them, at the next general meeting, for want of proper attention and care; and the said stewards shall forfeit to the box one shilling, to be paid at the next meeting, for every time that he refuses to go; but, if it be found that any member has brought upon himself sickness, distemper, infirmity, or inability to follow his trade or employment by debauchery, intercourse with lewd women, venereal taint, drunkenness, fighting, wrestling, or football-playing, in such sort of cases, he shall not have any weekly allowance from the society; or if any member counterfeits himself sick or infirm, as thereby not able to follow his business or trade, and shall for a time,

by means of such imposition, obtain and receive any weekly allowance or support, such member shall, for the future, be excluded from every benefit which might otherwise have accrued to him from the society. And, when any member is so far recovered from his sickness or indisposition as to be able to follow his business, he shall, within three days, give notice to one of the stewards, or be for ever excluded, unless he pays to the box, at the next general meeting, one whole week's allowance. And, if any member is known by any other member to work during the continuance of his allowance, he shall be expelled, as shall also that other member who does not inform the society of it; and the sick or infirm are to be regularly paid by the trustees or their stewards.

17. And, that every thing may at all times be transacted with regularity, decency, and decorum, in this society, no member or members shall have any drink of any kind to themselves separately from the rest of the society, nor shall any liquors be admitted into the room where the society meets during the time of their sitting, but what is ordered in by the stewards; and, when the appointed and limited hours for the sitting of this society are expired, one of the stewards shall give notice thereof, and every one of the members shall depart the room in a civil and peaceable manner, and it shall accordingly be cleared by one of the stewards before he departs the room. And if any member, during the time of the society's sitting, shall speak irreverently of the Almighty, disrespectfully of his Majesty or his government, or shall lay wagers, or curse, swear, blaspheme, talk obscenely, use taunting, reviling, or abusive language, or apparently seeks to quarrel with any of the members, he shall submit to a fine, to be put into the common stock, such as the majority of this society shall think fit to impose, according to the nature and circumstances of the offence, so that it does not exceed two shillings, nor be less than sixpence.

18. And if any member, after any meeting of this society, shall speak ill of, or cast any reflections on, any member or members of the

the Society, on or for what has been said or agreed to by the Society, he shall forfeit five shillings to the common stock, or be excluded.

19. No part of the common stock of this Society to be lent out, but upon lawful interest, government security, and with the consent of the majority assembled, at one of their quarterly meetings.

20. If the wife of any of the members come into the Society-room, or be therein while he is present, he shall forfeit sixpence to the fund, besides immediately leading her out, under pain of forfeiting his right to any part of the subscription or common stock of this Society.

21. If any member be cast into prison for debt, he shall not be allowed to pay any subscription or forfeitures, nor receive any part of the Society's property while in prison. When he comes out, he shall be received again as a member, without cost or charge.

22. The clerk shall be allowed the same benefit from the box as any other member of this Society, without being subject to pay any money towards it, except for forfeits.

23. The cash and minute books to be bought out of the common stock, and also to be renewed as often as shall be necessary, and the minutes of each meeting to be regularly signed by the trustees or stewards present, and may at any time be inspected by any of the members, on payment of sixpence to the clerk, and sixpence to the common fund.

24. Hereby power is also invested in the majority of this Society, at the time of each Whitfuntide meeting, to make an annual agreement with a surgeon and apothecary, whose stipend may and should be abated, upon apparent neglect.

L E T T E R XLII.

NOW, that this subject of the poor, their rights, duties, and the laws respecting them, draws near to its conclusion, it cannot be judged foreign to the design of these Letters, although not immediately within the professed purpose of it, to throw out some observations, and offer a few strictures, on the duties and conduct of the domestic menial servants of this kingdom, they being, in general, derived from, and are constantly adding to, the number of those who fall under the supervision of our poor-laws.

And here it should first be understood, that servants in husbandry, journeymen, or servants to any trade or manufactory, although they may properly, in some instances, be styled menial servants, are not considered in the following pages; because their conduct is regulated by acts of parliament, and they are under the cognizance of the magistrate; but such only as are necessary in the arrangement of domestic economy, or are retained for the purposes of luxury, vanity, or ostentation; and those domestics are so intermixed in the various departments of service, that it is not easy to separate them, as it would be very difficult, in the arrangement of any person's household, for a stranger to determine what servants are of domestic use and necessity solely, and what are supernumerary, or retained for the gratification of vanity or luxury.

But, in whatever department they may be engaged, they, in these times, are principally derived from that class of our fellow-subjects which have been the immediate object of our attention; and not from a more respectable class of citizens, whose children formerly thought it no disparagement to be retained in families of superior consideration or opulence.

In those days, the tenantry of the kingdom thought that a son or daughter, who was retained, as a menial servant, in a house of wealth and consequence, was placed in a respectable situation ; and the best principles of honesty, sobriety, and civility, were inculcated, that their children might preserve themselves in those situations, which the good conduct and reputation of their parents had obtained for them.

In those days the *kinder* duties of master and servant were reciprocally performed. The servants, on their part, strove for the good-will of those they served, by diligence, honesty, sobriety, regular behaviour, and attention to the interests of their immediate retainer, by an economic use of such property as they were entrusted with ; and they were rather humble friends than eye-servants ; and they received, exclusive of their wages, their diet, their lodging, and such part of their clothing as they agreed for, the advice, the encouragement, the protection, the friendship, of their employer, and seldom changed their place, but when they changed a life of servitude for a life of independence. This reciprocity of duties and affections is beautifully exemplified by Shakespear in his Orlando and Adam :

Adam. Master, go on, and I will follow thee
 To the last gasp with truth and loyalty.
 * * * * *

Orlando. There is an old poor man,
 Who after me hath many a weary step
 Limp'd in pure love ; till he be first fustic'd,
 Oppress'd with two weak evils, age and hunger,
 I will not touch a bit,

Thus these *kinder* duties were formerly reciprocally performed, or our Shakespear has not followed truth and nature in portraying the character of a faithful servant and grateful master.

But

But does the drama of the present stage hold out such examples to our view? Alas, no! Yet the stage still professes, and, with equal truth, to hold the mirror up to nature; to shew virtue its own image, vice her own likeness. Let us see what *personæ* the modern stage gives us for modern servants. The entertainment called High Life below Stairs is in point: no one has ever disputed the exactness of the representation to the reality of a modern servants hall: and where the public, by their unanimous approbation of a theatric representation, have stamped it with the reputation of being an exact picture of real life, be it allowed to argue from it as from a fact: it is, at the least, a less degrading and more cleanly manner of identifying such a fact, than stepping into a kitchen, to be able to assert it as such.

And can masters and mistresses, be they in whatever station of rank and opulence it may have pleased the Almighty to place them, knowing that such things are, suffer them to be? They can, and they do, because they are possessed with fears and apprehensions, more alarming than those arising from the dissipation of their property, and which force them tamely to submit to the taunts and insolence of their liveried and pampered domestics.

The evil complained of originates from profusion, and is fostered by vanity; which hourly submits to the grossest indignities in private, to support an appearance of magnificence in public, after the fundamental basis of all real greatness, independence of mind, is departed.

And, did the evil stop among people of this description, were only the proud, the vain, the ostentatious, and those whose character corresponds with Sallust's terse expressions, the *alieni appetentes, suorum profusi*, subject to these degrading and vexatious circumstances, the evil ought to be left to correct itself; or, in other words, the punishment flowing from the crime, the sufferers should receive no assistance from the interference of the legislature: they are pilfered by,

by, and stand in awe of, their servants; true; but it is no more than they deserve.

But, unfortunately for all ranks and denominations of people in this kingdom, who are so far elevated, by circumstances, above the want of the necessaries of life as to keep a domestic, they are all involved in the contagion, and suffer in their private economy, and domestic comfort, from the prevalence of a vice encouraged by the great. Because my lord the nabob, or the commissary pampers a swarm of unprincipled wretches in his household, who pilfer him of his property, the most humble master in the vale of private life must submit to similar depredations, or clean his own shoes: this is surely an evil, as it involves the innocent in those consequences which only the guilty ought to feel.

But, although we suffer and labour under the disease, it is not an easy matter to point out the cure; the legislature seems either not to have thought it a blot in the police of the country, or it is a blot they have been cautious of hitting; the only attempts made were in the years 1529 and 1792, in which last year an act of parliament subjected those who gave a forged character, or stated in a character of a servant what was not true,* to a penalty of 20*l*.

This can be but of little service as the act is framed; for, the first clause respects only those who personate a master or mistress, &c. and give any false, forged, or counterfeited, character to any person offering as a servant.

The second clause goes only to those who shall assert that a servant has been hired for a period or station other than such period or station as he or she has been hired in.

The third, to those who shall assert that a servant was discharged at any other time, or had not been hired in any previous service, contrary to the fact: and there are no other clauses respecting giving characters of servants.

The fourth and fifth clauses ~~respect only~~ the persons who offer themselves as servants, ~~pretending to have served~~ where they have not,

not, or offering themselves with a false certificate, or who shall alter a certificate, or, having been in service before, shall pretend the contrary: the remaining clauses affix the penalty, point out the mode of conviction, and the distribution of the penalty when recovered.

Had the legislature probed the foul wound to the bottom, they would have discovered that no lenient application can be equal to a cure; nothing short of making a breach of trust, in the instance of menial domestic servants, a felony, will stop the contagion; this was done in 1529; but those instances where the value of the goods embezzled did not exceed forty shillings, which are at least equal to ten pounds of the present money, are not subject to the act; and, it is well known, the depredations of servants are generally composed of a mass of minutiae, such as victuals, wine, beer in small quantities; each item being individually of small value, and the act of embezzling difficult of proof, but easy to commit, and that facility of commission, arising from a necessary confidence reposed in the servant, to enable him to do the duties of his place, for the performance of which, he is hired at the price of his food, clothing, and considerable wages; therefore, an act of parliament constituting a single instance of embezzlement of the property of his employer felony, be the value what it may, would have the same effect as those statutes, which make it felony, to steal a trifling value in property, which, necessarily from the nature of it, lies exposed to depredations; or, probably, the putting the property of people, with respect to their servants, on the same footing as wood, turnips, cabbages, &c. are placed with respect to people stealing them; for the first offence, on summary proof before a magistrate, commitment to the house of correction for a limited time, and the second offence felony; if followed up, by treating the concealment, by the master or mistress, of such breach of trust, as a misdemeanor, indictable at the quarter-sessions, of which concealment, a character given for honesty, and proof of the master or
mistress

mistress knowing at the time that the servant had been guilty of a breach of trust, shall be held sufficient to convict such master or mistress. Such a regulation would probably have some effect.

But there ought to be established, by universal opinion among all those who retain any menial servants, a sense of rectitude and point of honour, with respect to the characters which are given of servants: the line of truth to be pursued should be that plain and comprehensive one described in the *voir dire* of a witness at the bar of a court of justice; if the character of a servant is requested, and is granted, that character, with respect to his honesty and sobriety, the material points of his moral conduct, should contain *the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth*; the giver of the character should speak of the servant as he is, nothing extenuate, nor set down aught in malice.

During the halcyon days of peace and prosperity, the minister shewed his attention to those in the middling ranks of society, by relieving them from the duty on female servants: it was well done, both because the tax was not productive, and because it was unpopular: should the present necessary war we are engaged in rage throughout another campaign, of which there is but little doubt, surely somewhat might be raised for the revenue, from the number of our countrymen and women in service, who certainly may be said to be better fed than taught; by a per centage upon their wages, to be retained by their master or mistress, accountable to the collectors of the servants tax, on any servants leaving their places within a year: a less per centage if within two years; unless the persons who retained them, either break up house-keeping, or actually and *bona fide* reduce the number of their servants, or are convicted, summarily before a magistrate, of personal ill-usage or refusal to pay wages; and this idea, with respect to the justice of it, may be supported on the following generally-allowed fact; that no master or mistress willingly changes servants; with respect to livery-servants, a change is a real and considerable expense, besides the

the disagreeable circumstance of introducing strangers into a private family ; therefore, it in general is the fault of the servant.

Disputes between masters and their servants, in a variety of trades and manufactures, are, by various acts of parliament, referred to a justice of the peace ; and, as these acts have increased in number and in extent of operation from an early part of the reign of Charles the Second to the present time, we are at least justified in saying, that they have had the advantage of experience, and have proved serviceable.

What is the reason, that an act of parliament, framed on principles similar to that for regulating disputes between masters and servants in husbandry, and adapted to the situation of menial servants, hired for the purpose of domestic arrangement, in private families, should not be tried ? I confess myself unable to see the objection.

Were the servants, who are retained in the families of individuals, of the same class and description of people they formerly consisted of ; did they proceed from the cadets of the best families in the kingdom ; were they now, as formerly, in the families of our nobility, the younger children of respectable houses ; or did they in general proceed from the tenantry of the kingdom ; and assisted now, as they did then, by being domesticated in the house of their immediate superior, to preserve the chain of connection, which, in the time of the feudal tenures, subsisted from the cottage to the throne ; there would then be no occasion to restrain their conduct by severe laws of the state ; their actions would then be under the inspection of their immediate superior ; to whom, in those times, they were accustomed to look up, as to a patron and protector : but such connections and such habits have passed away with the system which familiarized them to our ancestors ; and our present army of domestics arises from a different quarter, is endued with different principles and ideas, and, for the safety of our property and the peace of our families, requires coercion and correction

tion with a different hand; it is not principle, but fear, which must now keep them honest; it is not affection, but interest, which can insure their civility; and gratitude will no longer preserve their fidelity.

At the same time, as these strictures are thrown out, with respect to a necessary interference of the legislature in the regulation of the conduct of menial servants; which, in these days of liberality and license, may seem to some as founded on a harsh or illiberal principle; but which, in fact, flow from the necessity of the case, which calls aloud for the licentiousness of bad servants to be restrained, and their peculations to be repressed; it is but right to observe, that good servants should undoubtedly be brought forward, as proper objects of reward and encouragement; the best proof of their desert is the continuance a length of time in a place, and leaving that place handsomely, and with a good character; a percentage upon all the wages they have received, after the wages of the three first years are deducted; to be paid them by their master or mistress, on quitting the service, in addition to their wages, might be the general reward, by the sanction of an act of parliament to that purpose; unless such a society, for the encouragement of good servants, as is established in the metropolis, should be generally subscribed to; or similar societies, being established throughout the kingdom; should render such an interference of the legislature unnecessary.

L E T T E R XLIII.

IT has been asserted, in a former part of this investigation, that local inconvenience and distress, arising from the number of the poor, and the expenses of maintaining them, had occasioned many districts

districts within the county of Suffolk to apply to parliament for the power of incorporating themselves, and of regulating the employment and maintenance of the poor, within those respective districts, by certain rules agreed upon among themselves; that, in consequence thereof, several acts of parliament had passed incorporating the districts applying for them; that the poor have been since governed and regulated within those districts, according to the powers given by such acts; and that the convenience and inconvenience, experienced from the execution of them, should be elucidated by the best information that can be obtained from the districts thus incorporated.

In consequence of this engagement I determined to visit the houses of industry which have been erected within the county of Suffolk; that, from actual inspection, personal inquiry, and ocular demonstration, the facts respecting these institutions, the conduct of them, and the consequences which have arisen to the public from them, might, with some certainty, be stated; and that some pertinent observations might be made on those facts and consequences.

Such notices as were taken on the spot, and the informations received since, by letter, from the gentlemen who attend to the management of them, with such also as have, by their direction, been communicated by letters from the governors, shall be stated, according to the priority, in point of time, of the incorporating-acts, and the erection of the different houses of industry.

The middle of the summer was the time chosen for the excursion; and the houses were inspected, as suited convenience, from eight in the morning until eight at night.

The following questions were put to the governors of the houses of industry, and their answers to them minuted, when satisfactory answers could be obtained, and are incorporated with the other information collected. In some instances, the governor or attendant
could

could not immediately give an answer by word of mouth, but engaged to do it in writing.

1. How many poor men, women, and children, have been admitted, since the erection of the house, annually?

2. How many have died, since the same time, annually?

3. Has any, and what, part of the debt contracted by authority of parliament been paid?

4. Have the poor-rates in the district incorporated been increased or diminished?

5. What are the manufactures in which the poor are employed?

6. Is the sale of any of the manufactures, and which of them, diminished by the war?

7. Are the poor, or any of them, and how many, employed in agriculture?

8. Is any particular disease epidemic, or more prevalent than another, among the poor, and what is the nature of such disease?

These questions were calculated for the purpose, to form some judgement whether these institutions tend to increase the chance of human life, to diminish the poor's rate, both in times of peace and war, and also to form some idea of the comparative profit arising in these houses from the manufactures of wool and hemp.

The hundreds of Colneis and Carlford were incorporated, by act of parliament, in the 29th year of his late majesty's reign; and their house of industry in the parish of Nacton was built in 1757, and first inhabited in 1758.

The information which could be obtained on the spot was not much to be depended on, the governor and his wife being from home when the visit was made, which was about six o'clock on the evening of the committee-day, and no person in the way was able to give any material information. My minutes were as follow:

Manufactures

Manufactures are cordage, sacks, plough-lines, and spinning for Norwich.

Boys, employed in spinning hemp, earn 6*d.* a day, one with another.

Girls employed in spinning wool: the great girls stinted at 6*d.* a day, but receive for their work only half.

The dormitory is too much crowded: three or four boys in a bed, two men: there ought to be no more than two children in a bed, and one man. This number in one bed occasioned the air to be disagreeable to the smell. The same was not observed in any of the other houses.

The dining-hall is very neat and commodious.

Land, in occupation by the house, five acres. Two cows are kept. Only one man at work in agriculture, no boys.

The poor are now allowed more liberty, without the walls of the area on which the house and offices stand, than formerly, and are more healthy than they were.

The following answer to the foregoing questions was transmitted to me by Mr. John Enefer, clerk to the guardians of the house, by the order of Philip B. Brooke, Esq. one of the directors of that house.

NACTON HOUSE OF INDUSTRY.

THE poor are employed in wool-spinning, twine-spinning, making sacks, &c.; the neat profits of which, from an average of the last seven years, amount to 277*l.* 13*s.* 6*d.* a year.

The poor's rates were at first 1487*l.* 13*s.* 5*d.* a year, but advanced, at Michaelmas, 1790, to 2603*l.* 7*s.* 0*d.* a year.

The expenditure upon an average for the last seven years, 2367*l.* 8*s.* 8*d.* annually.

The original debt was 4800*l.* is now 4400*l.* and will be reduced to 500*l.* more at Michaelmas next, 1793.

The

The men and women, able to work, earn from twopence to sixpence a day.

The children are stinted (according to their abilities, and not according to their ages) from one halfpenny to sixpence a day.

Very few hands are employed in agriculture.

The number of poor admitted into the house, and the number of deaths in the house, for the last 14 years :

Years.		Admitted.			Deaths.
1779	-	166	-	-	46
1780	-	177	-	-	33
1781	-	193	-	-	68
1782	-	174	-	-	33
1783	-	168	-	-	23
1784	-	155	-	-	24
1785	-	112	-	-	23
1786	-	112	-	-	27
1787	-	108	-	-	13
1788	-	136	-	-	11
1789	-	133	-	-	11
1790	-	142	-	-	35
1791	-	125	-	-	21
1792	-	116	-	-	21
		<hr/>			<hr/>
		2017			389

The most prevalent diseases in the house have been the small-pox, measles, and hooping-cough.

The *hundred of Blything* was incorporated in 1764, and the house of industry built on a rising ground in the parish of Bulcamp, about a mile from Bliburgh.

They have two manufactures for the use of the house, viz. linen and woollen, for stockings and wearing apparel. Linen is made in the

the house to the value of three shillings and sixpence a yard, but they sell nothing.

They spin for the Norwich woollen-manufactures, and have earned four hundred pounds a year.

Forty-six parishes were incorporated.

The average-number of poor admitted the first five years amounted to about 203.

There are now in summer about 250, in winter about 300, in the house.

Many children are admitted without their parents.

About eight hundred pounds are annually paid to out-pensioners.

The sum borrowed was 12,000*l.*; half was paid in 1780, the whole in 1791.

The average of the poor's rates annually in the incorporated parishes, when the hundred was first incorporated, was not above one shilling in the pound, which rate was diminished one-eighth in 1780, when half the debt was paid.

None of the poor are, at present, employed in agriculture.

In 1781, a putrid fever raged in the neighbourhood: the town of Bliburgh lost one-third of its inhabitants; this house lost 130 of its poor.

Twenty-five acres of land belong to the house; thirty acres are hired, some for the plough, some lies in pasture, some in garden.

Sir John Rous, Bart. was so obliging as to send me a list of admissions and deaths in this house since the institution, by which it appears, that, from October 13th, 1766, to August 8th, 1793, five thousand two hundred and seven paupers have been admitted, and one thousand three hundred and eighty-one have died.

The hundreds of Mutford and Lotbingland were incorporated in 1764: their house of industry is in the parish of Oulton, near Lowestoft, and has been built twenty-seven years.

The

The number of parishes incorporated is twenty-four; their income about twelve hundred a year; of this nearly two hundred arises from earnings.

The sum borrowed was 6200*l*. Expenses in building were about 3000*l*. The house is erected on a frugal plan, and will contain 200 poor. For the first seven years, not above one hundred were admitted annually; but the annual number now amounts to 150, or thereabouts. 1700*l*. of the original debt has been paid, besides 300*l*. a debt contracted when the house was under bad management.

The poor's rates were advanced, in 1781, ten per cent. more than the assessment of the parishes, when incorporated, and have not been diminished; but 300*l*. of the debt continues to be paid annually.

The register of deaths has not been regularly kept during the first years of the institution; but the average-number, during the last six years, has been eleven in a year.

The prevailing manufacture is, making nets for the herring-fishery. The merchants furnish the twine, and it is braided by the yard.

Hemp: what they grow is manufactured in the house; but, lately, the weaving has been put out.

Woollen yarn is also spun; but the trade is at present bad; therefore, only such are employed in spinning wool who can do nothing else.

A child's stint, either for braiding nets, spinning yarn or hemp, is fourpence a day. Several children, not above seven years of age, were braiding.

Sometimes some of the poor are let out to work in husbandry at sixpence a day: their employment is chiefly weeding.

Weekly earnings of the house, on an average, four pounds.

Out-allowances were, last year, 55*l*. and are rather increasing, but supposed to be bad management, and that they ought to be diminished.

Land, in occupation, twelve acres, all arable; two, yearly, sown with hemp. No cows kept.

The hundred of Wangford incorporated 1764.

The house of industry at Shipmeadow, between Harlestown and Beccles, has been built twenty-six years. Twenty-seven parishes are incorporated. The annual income from their rates is 1750*l*. The general number of poor in the house about two hundred; of deaths about twenty in a year: amount of labour, about three pounds a week: their employment spinning for the Norwich manufacturers: there is no manufactory in the house.

Out-allowances, about eighty pounds a year.

Children are taken from large families.

Original debt, 8500*l*. of which 4000*l*. is paid.

Land, forty-five acres; twenty-seven of them arable. Five cows are kept.

There is no chapel; they attend the parish-church.*

The hundreds of Loes and Wilford were incorporated in 1765.

The house of industry, which is in the parish of Melton, was erected the same year, and is on a more extended and expensive scale than any yet examined. Their dining-hall is very spacious and neat, as are the dormitories. There are apartments appropriated to the surgeon; and those belonging to the governor are large and convenient. The cellars and offices are excellent. The boys school and the girls school are both of them good rooms. There are also rooms which are made use of as a penitentiary lodging for refractory people, and those guilty of offences which require solitary restraint, by virtue of the act of parliament, enabling these hundreds to borrow an additional sum of money, which act passed in 1790.

* Oulton and Shipmeadow houses of industry were visited, and the notices of them taken, by Samuel Brisc, Esq. of Clare, a near relation and worthy friend, who accompanied me to all the other houses of industry in the county.